



Weekly Activity Update

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Revitalizing Agriculture

Enhancing Rural Agricultural Development

USAID is enhancing food security and income for the rural population through its Rebuilding Afghanistan's Agricultural Markets Program (RAMP). The project's objectives are to increase agricultural output and productivity as well as boost incomes by linking producers and markets. The program supports the extension of technologies (new crop varieties, fertilizers, crop management and protection, equipment and machinery) through extensive field demonstrations, information dissemination, and building private sector capacity.

RAMP has made significant strides this reporting period and each achievement serves to enhance the impact of the others. Farmer training programs, including crop demonstrations, field days, and training by extension agents, build rural capacity and enhance productivity and quality of produce. Since March 13, USAID has trained 10,128 farmers for a total of 606,364 farmers since July 2003. Rehabilitating rural roads ensures that farmers can get their produce to market. In the past two weeks, twelve km of farm-to-market roads were paved, bringing the total to 312 km. Village-based seed enterprises (VBSE) are farmer-led seed production and marketing units that help farmers get rapid access to quality seed of improved crop varieties. To date, there are 15 operational VBSEs that have produced 813 tons of improved seed. To facilitate applications of the new technologies, RAMP repairs irrigation structures: In the past two weeks, 7 km of canals were repaired in the Nangarhar Valley and, in Helmand, 8 km of the Boghra canal were fixed. Together, these repairs have improved irrigation for 400 hectares in the two provinces.



In Helmand Province, Afghan farmers enhance their knowledge by participating in a potato crop demonstration.



Afghan farmers in Helmand province are trained in trellising, the practice of building a framework for growing trees and climbing plants.

Strengthening the Government

Enhancing Central Bank Operations

A central bank with strong regional branches provides a solid foundation for Afghanistan's growing economy. One objective of USAID's multi-faceted economic governance program is strengthening operations of Da Afghanistan Bank (DAB), Afghanistan's central bank. Branch Management Workshops are held each month, which both enhances the network and builds local employee skills. This month, 120 participants attended the three day workshop, including 33 regional managers from DAB's capital branches. Workshop participants learned about new banking forms and technology.

In addition to providing training, USAID provides financial and technical support. To date, 450 computers have been installed in DAB's regional branches. This additional hardware has greatly increased the communication capacity of the DAB network, and now 28 branches are connected via DAB's internet system.



As part of a village based seed enterprise in Helmand province, five farmers stored their wheat seed in this bin. The straw protects the 8.5 tons of wheat seed from the heat.

Strengthening the Government

Preparing for Parliamentary Elections Through Civic Education

One of the ways USAID is helping Afghanistan prepare for its September 18 parliamentary elections is through electoral civic education programs. Specific training for women political party activists is underway. In three provinces, 181 women attended this training, held at local Election Training & Information Centers (ETIC). A separate civic education initiative for all Afghans, underway since late October, has reached 437,000 voters as of March 10. Also, a candidate and parliamentarian training program began on March 14; attendance is 30-40 participants per day.

To utilize Afghanistan's new thriving media outlets, two USAID trainers made radio broadcasts in both Dari and Pashto explaining the parliament structure under the new constitution. In addition, USAID provides electoral administration and computer training to IEC (International Electoral Commission) Commissioners.



In preparation for Afghanistan's first parliamentary elections, USAID civic education programs continue their efforts from last fall's successful Presidential election

Security Incidents

Note: Hostile attacks are reported through USAID's security contractors and the Associated Press

- **Number of Hostile Attacks:** Security incidents have risen this month along with warmer weather. During this reporting period, there were 12 hostile attacks resulting in seven injuries and nine deaths.
- **USAID Related:** During this reporting period, there was one hostile attack directly affecting USAID related projects and/or staff. There were five other attacks against other aid agencies and NGOs.
- **Latest Attack:** On March 28, in Kabul, an IED (Improvised Explosive Device) exploded, injuring a Canadian security guard and two Afghans. The victims were taken to a nearby ISAF (International Security Assistance Force) hospital. Two nearby civilian vehicles were slightly damaged. The road is frequented by ISAF and UN vehicles.

